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ABSTRACT

This introductory guide for planning television and radio productions in schools covers the following topics: (1) guidelines for preparing a television script; (2) grooming for television; (3) delivering the message; (4) the production studio; (5) points on camera operation; (6) lighting the studio; (7) guidelines for making graphics; (8) suggestions for television productions dealing with administration, art, business classes, English, extra-curricular activities, foreign languages, general classroom teaching, health, home economics, mathematics, music, science, social studies, and speech and theater; (9) guidelines for preparing a radio script; (10) script delivery; (11) the radio production area; (12) recording equipment; (13) recording the production; and (14) suggestions for radio productions. A glossary of instructional television and radio terminology is included. (MES)

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A PRIMER FOR IN-SCHOOL PRODUCTIONS

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A PRIMER FOR IN-SCHOOL PRODUCTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Television has and will continue to play an important role in our lives. It often influences our thinking without a keen awareness of why or how. Giving students the opportunity to become involved in television and radio productions encourages creativity and awareness that no other opportunity provides.

It is hoped that this booklet will serve as an introductory guide to planning productions in schools and that it will help build a positive approach to using television and radio to stimulate and motivate students.

Television and radio productions often bring a total new career dimension. The field today is so large and varied that awareness can become a springboard to a new world of careers. Only involvement can stimulate the excitement that comes from seeing ideas recorded on tape, whether it be video or audio.

Educators are purchasing cameras, video tape recorders, audio records, and lighting equipment. They realize the learning impact for the students involved and the interest stimulated by seeing their peers perform.

PRODUCTION FOR LEARNING

The bending and molding of this great and powerful medium to create learning experiences lies with the educator. Opportunities are only as limited as we ourselves.

Video and audio productions can be designed and produced by and for every department in school. They can include many students or only a few, but the more students that become involved the larger the storehouse of ideas.

The Social Studies Department is the area in which most schools begin their productions. A program featuring the national, state, and local news; a weather report; school news; and an editorial would be a good beginning. This kind of program is of interest to most students and can be done effectively in a wide range of grade levels. It can involve a whole class by assigning five or six students to do each program, giving all an opportunity to participate.

The responsibility for the script for each segment lies with the student. He must read newspapers, listen to commercial television and radio, call the weather bureau, take notes, condense material for reporting, and write cue cards. The list of activities demands the use of many learning skills and the weaving of these skills into a tangible product. Weather reporting requires understanding the unique vocabulary, and much research is needed to prepare an editorial. Analytical thinking, decision making, and the ability to summarize are skills that develop within the framework of a production.

At first you might consider one newscast a week, then additional ones as the abilities of the students become more refined.

Appearing on television acts as a stimulus in motivating the student to perform well. It gives him a true picture of his visual self and how he sounds. Having the opportunity to see and hear oneself is often the key to self-improvement.

In planning for the greatest learning environment, it is suggested that the telecast be sent out live but taped to allow participants to view the tape at a later time. This allows the student to view and be his own critic, to stimulate growth and self evaluation.

There is a list of suggestions for other television productions on page 9 and radio productions on page 19.

The production team can be a composite of one or more of the following:

Script Writer—Responsible for the content and arranging ideas in a meaningful, attention-getting sequence.

Producer—Responsible for getting the job done.

Director—Directs technicians and participants in what to do. Directs the production.

In small in-school productions, one person may accomplish all or a combination of the aforementioned tasks.

TELEVISION PRODUCTIONS

I. GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING SCRIPT:

1. Preparing for telecasts requires time and effort if the report is to be presented skillfully. Since time on the air is limited, it must be highly structured to say what needs to be said descriptively and clearly.
2. Write your report and read it aloud to yourself and to another person. Check for difficult to pronounce word sequences.
3. Check for grammatical errors and pronunciation errors.
4. Check your report to see if you have included accurate information (to the best of your knowledge) and that it does not include biased information or opinions unless you are preparing an editorial.
5. Avoid trite words and phrases.
6. Avoid using white or light colored paper for notes during the telecast. White can cause technical problems in the picture.

II. GUIDELINES FOR GROOMING ON TELEVISION:

1. How you look on television is important, and a pleasant expression is a must unless you are role playing.
2. Try to avoid wearing white as it causes technical problems.
3. Avoid wearing shiny jewelry that might reflect light back into the camera.
4. Avoid clothing with small patterns like checks or herring-bone tweed.
5. Black students should avoid very light colored clothing and white students (especially fair-skinned) should avoid black or very dark clothing.
6. Pastel colors are very pleasing on color television, so wear these if possible.
7. Hair should be neat and well groomed, making sure the eyes are cleared.
8. Makeup should be light. Powder on boys and girls helps eliminate shine.

III. DELIVERING THE MESSAGE:

1. It is very important to maintain eye contact with the camera as much as possible. Remember this establishes an eye-to-eye contact between you and your audience.
2. Proper pronunciation is essential to having an authoritative and intelligent report. Proper names and foreign words are particularly tricky. Look them up or ask someone who knows the correct pronunciation. **DO NOT ASSUME!**
3. Most people should slow their reading pace for television announcing.
4. Always know your script so well that you can say it without reading. This is always more appealing. When you use cue cards (held by another person in back of the camera), it is just that, a cue to what you are going to say.
5. Watch the professionals on the networks. Observe their writing style, delivery style, expression, and head and eye level.
6. Check audio. Be sure the microphone is close enough to record a strong sound. If you are using a lavaliere microphone, do not let jewelry or buttons touch it. Additional information on microphones can be found in the Radio Section under **Mike Techniques** on page 15.
7. Do not let buttons on sleeves move on the table as they will interfere with audio reception.

IV. PRODUCTION STUDIO:

1. The room for the production might be a small room adjoining the Library with a table large enough to seat three or four students in one corner. Students should sit close to each other. They will not appear crowded on television. The camera should be located in the opposite corner of the room.
2. The area in back of the participants should not be too busy (cluttered); and if necessary, it can be draped with paper or cloth. A soft color is best, and if possible, the background should be darker than fleshtones.
3. Some schools that are wired with a building distribution system and have production equipment might assign call letters (ex. WCRT) to their in-school network.
4. Unless you have editing capabilities, it is best to do the production straight through. Starting and stopping the recorder makes noisy areas on the tape.

V. POINTS ON CAMERA OPERATION:

In operation of the television camera, one should always remember to keep the camera steady. If movement of the camera is called for, move slowly and smoothly. Practice in panning (horizontal movement) and tilting (vertical movement) will sharpen your ability to move smoothly. On a large card (posterboard size or black board if handy), draw a straight horizontal and vertical line. Practice moving from one end of the line to the opposite end while keeping the line in the middle of the viewfinder. Remember to move steadily and slowly. When you feel comfortable with these skills, try following a diagonal line.

If your camera has a zoom lens, zoom-ins should be used for emphasis and zoom-outs to reveal. Do not overuse your zoom lens. Be judicious in its use!

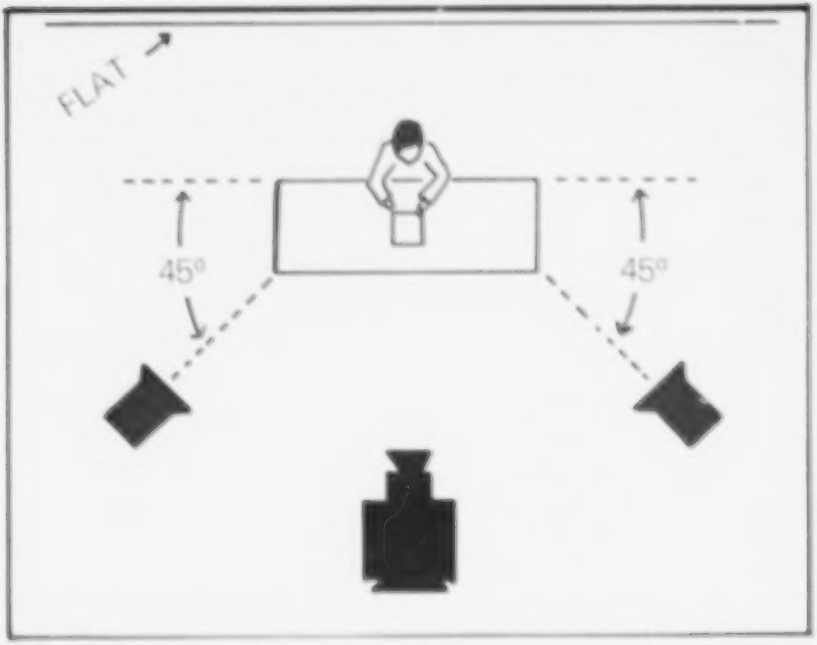
Tips on proper camera use can be found in the operator's manual. If you have misplaced it, a few points to keep in mind are listed below:

1. Never point the camera directly at the sun.
2. Do not point the camera directly at bright lights **unless** a starburst filter is used, and then for limited durations only.
3. If you have to leave the camera on, be sure to cap the lens before moving away. The lens should always be capped before moving away. The lens should always be capped after using the camera.
4. Remember that a television camera is a delicate piece of equipment: treat it as such. Avoid mechanical shock and reduce vibration during transportation of equipment.

VI. LIGHTING THE STUDIO:

1. Effective lighting can be the total difference between a good production or a poor one and only testing the brightness through the camera can determine what is needed. Two flood lamps with hinged panels ("barndoors") are usually sufficient for controlling light. There could be a need for a spotlight to act as a key light or accenting light.

2. If possible, lights should be placed high enough to cast shadows below the camera viewing level. In setting the stage for the production, if you are to use backdrop sections (flats), shadows can be reduced by increasing the distance between the subject and the flats. The flats should be a pastel color, preferably darker than skin tones. A background that is too dark can be lightened with the use of light. A background that is too light, however, cannot be darkened quite as easily by taking light away.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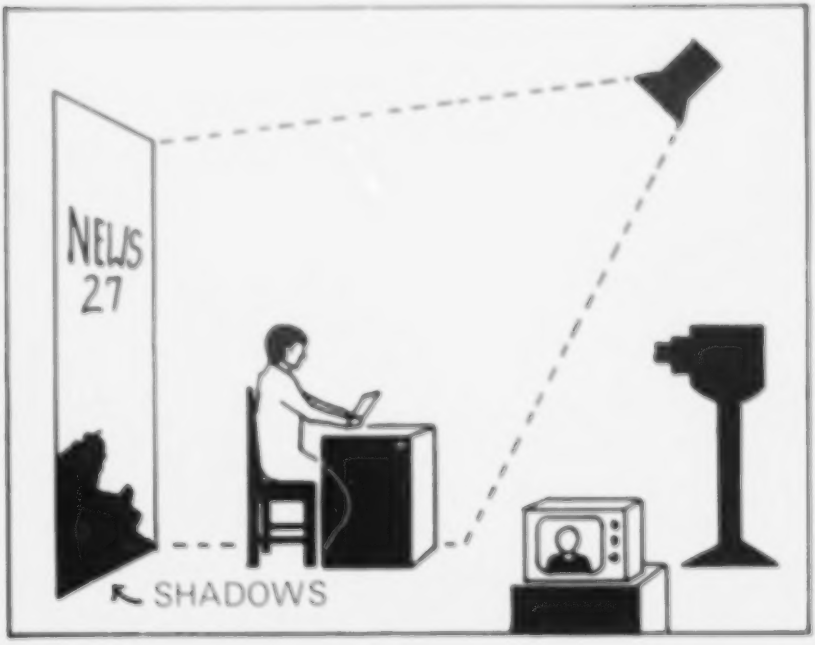
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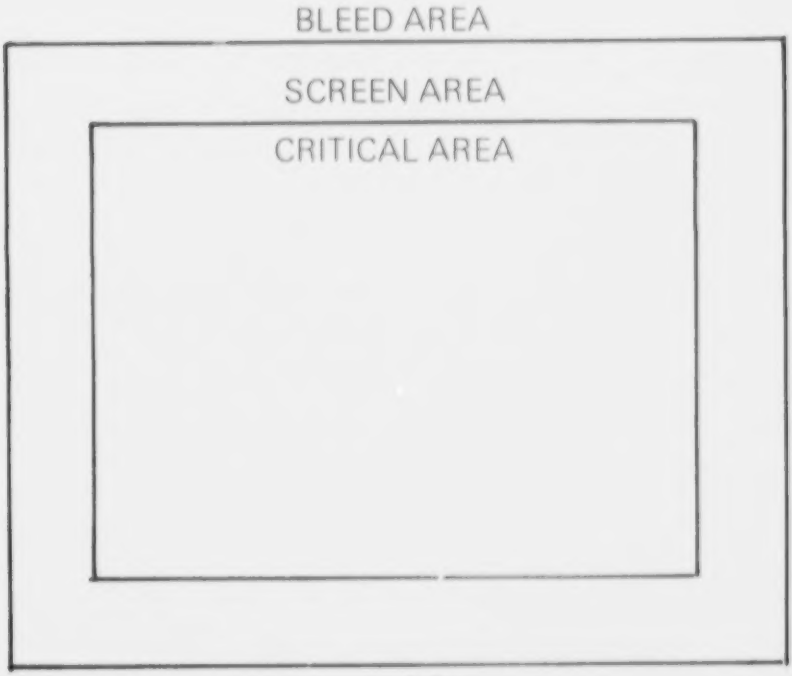
SHADOWS

VII. GUIDELINES FOR MAKING GRAPHICS:

Many productions require graphics of some kind to outline areas, to designate shapes, and to describe and enforce the message.

1. The television screen is three units high and four units wide. When preparing visuals, it is important to keep this ratio (i.e. 6:8, 9:12, etc.). This is called **aspect ratio.**
2. All graphic material needs to include sufficient bleed area, or safe area (extra or unused area on all sides of scanning area framed by television camera) to allow for camera set up and positioning of material.
3. Contrast should be definite but not extreme. Avoid large areas of white. Stay with basic colors: blues, greens, etc. or white lettering on flat black.
4. Detail graphics and photographic visuals should be kept simple and bold. Avoid cluttered, detailed art work. Limit outline to no more than five lines with a maximum of five words per line.
5. Avoid glossy cards and lettering material, to eliminate glare. Material should be strong enough to remain on a card stand without bending or flopping over.



VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR OTHER PRODUCTIONS:

ADMINISTRATION

1. Tape student council meetings.
2. Use as a home-bound teacher.
3. Tape school activities to show at PTA meetings.
4. Use to show community officials such as the policemen, firemen, etc. in action
5. Tape a graduation address by a noted speaker.
8. Tape school deficiences to present to school board.

ART:

1. Show how to use water colors.
2. Show how to mount pictures.
3. Show how to use fingerpaints, use modeling clay, and make puppets
4. Demonstrate paper mache.
5. Show famous paintings and research on them.
6. Demonstrate artwork in chalk.
7. Demonstrate art techniques.
9. Show charcoal sketching, step by step.

BUSINESS CLASSES:

1. Show proper position for taking shorthand.
3. Show various filing systems.
4. Tape an actual job interview.
5. Show proper procedures in using office machines, cleaning, and operating.

ENGLISH:

1. Show students reading or dramatizing their own stories to bring out the main idea of a story or to show sequence in a story.
2. Use to orient students to the library or as a review course for its use.
3. Show handwriting techniques, e.g. zoom in on handwriting and compare it to a master on the screen.
4. Show students reading original poetry.
5. Televise a chalkboard lesson in phonetics.
6. Do a program on puppet shows.
7. Prepare a lesson on dictionary usage; show where and how to look up words.
8. Give a lesson on letter writing.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

1. Video tape cheerleaders doing routines to enable them to improve or think up new ideas by viewing their performance on tape.
2. Use to promote school activities.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE:

1. Tape small plays the students act out.
2. Use to teach a foreign language.

GENERAL CLASSROOM TEACHING:

1. Present a student-produced school newscast.
2. Use a study aid for slow students.
3. Tape important lessons for use later.
4. Use so teachers can see experts on a topic.
5. Show students correct parliamentary procedure.

HEALTH:

1. Demonstrate various exercises in physical education.
2. Teach hygiene.

HOME ECONOMICS:

1. Demonstrate: Flower arranging, How to make bound buttonholes, Cooking procedures, Cake decorating, Carving meat, Mixing ingredients.
2. Show floor plans for home planning.
3. Tape a lesson in consumer buying and budgeting.

MATHEMATICS:

1. Explain sets.
2. Explain open and closed curves.
3. Explain grouping of tens.
4. Show carrying and borrowing.
5. Show multiplication and division.
6. Demonstrate measurements.
7. Explain polygons.
8. Explain volumes and areas.
9. Demonstrate computers.

MUSIC:

1. Let students hear great musicians and tell about their lives.
2. Explain basic make-up of orchestra or symphony.
3. Tape a music concert.
4. Teach a choral reading.
5. Give children a chance to see and hear orchestras, concerts, and operas which they wouldn't see otherwise.

SCIENCE:

1. Show removal of a heart from a frog with the minute areas enlarged, thus showing dissection in general.
2. Enlarge a microscopic image and show it to an entire class at once.
3. View activities of a biological colony, example: an ant colony.
4. Show the development of cocoon into a butterfly.
5. Show cell division.
6. Show chemistry experiments.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

1. Show graphs, maps, diagrams, and charts.
2. Show a documentary on some historical event. Students could also create their own documentaries as part of a research project.
3. Record actual news broadcasts for future use.
4. Record student interviews with community leaders.
5. Show how to use a globe.
6. Demonstrate courtroom procedures through a mock trial.
7. Show Senate and/or Congress in action.

SPEECH AND THEATRE:

1. Tape students' mannerisms while giving speeches to show different actions.
2. Use for instant replay of elementary children as they speak before the group for self-criticism.
3. Produce a talent show to be presented to the whole school. (Especially in school where there is a limited amount of space and the whole school could not assemble at the same time).
6. Use to give students instructions in TV productions—lighting, camera techniques, audio recording, directing, etc.
7. Tape well-known speakers.
9. Show declamation reading, then review weaknesses and strong points.

RADIO PRODUCTIONS

I. GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A SCRIPT:

Always develop your audio materials (radio or audio tape recordings) on paper before attempting to broadcast or record.

1. Use standard audio script format of an 8½x11 piece of paper divided into halves.
2. All spoken words and sound effects should be written out in the right column called **AUDIO**.
3. Use upper and lower case for spoken words. Caps for all sound effects and music, etc. Put sound effects in parentheses.
4. Double space between lines.
5. Indentify all talent (parts) in caps, written in the center of **AUDIO** column and underline them.
6. All directions should go in the left column and should be typed in upper and lower-case. "Directions" include information (not spoken) for the talent, director, audio engineer, etc. (e.g. "Narrator moves back from mike as his last word is spoken.")
7. A rule-of-thumb for script timing is: each 14 to 18 lines equals **one minute** of recording time. Exceptions would be long lists of numbers, dramatic vignettes, etc.
8. Never hyphenate words between lines or carry a sentence over to another page.

II. SCRIPT DELIVERY:

MIKE TECHNIQUE

1. Establish voice levels (volume) for each person or speaker. Keep a list of each person and the proper volume (gain) setting for their voice. **Note:** Recorders incorporating Automatic Gain Control (AGC) will not require the above--volume is automatically controlled by the electronics in the recorder.
2. To avoid mike "popping," or the loud pop of air that hits the mike and causes distortion (such as words beginning with a "p"), simply talk "across" the mike not into it, and move back several inches from the mike. A mike **wind screen** (a foam covering) is a big help against "popping" or wind noises from outside.
3. If an error is made, stop the recording and begin again at the start of the paragraph-edit later.

READING TECHNIQUES

1. Simple scripts are generally the best ones. The vocabulary should be uncomplicated; the language easy to understand; the pace natural. The scenes should be simple but cleverly developed; the sentences short and direct; use the active voice.
2. Check out pronunciation of all special, technical, or foreign words.
3. Use a relaxed, friendly manner for straight narration reading: speak as though you were addressing only one person—a friend or a parent. Normal, conversational tones are best.
4. When recording multiple voices, such as in a dramatic production or reading, select sufficient voice differences in tone and texture so that the listener can distinguish the various parts (talent).
5. Practice shifting script pages without making noises—the mike will record paper shuffling.
6. Maintain placement from mike once volume levels are set. (The exception: when the script calls for yelling or a loud vocal outcry, simply turn away or step back from the mike for that line.

III. PRODUCTION AREA (STUDIO):

1. Recordings can be made anywhere—depending on what outcome you want. Recording outside with the sound of real birds and dogs barking are natural for an exterior, dramatic, or documentary program.
2. Select a small room somewhere isolated for a studio. Elimate the hollow or echo by covering the walls with cloth to absorb some of the sound. Place the mike in the center of the room for best results.

IV. RECORDING EQUIPMENT:

1. Any reel-to-reel or audio cassette recorder will produce an acceptable school audio project, with the exception of a large musical production. In the case of the latter, a more sophisticated audio set-up of equipment and studio needs would be required. An audio specialist should be consulted in such an instance.
2. For regular school recordings not requiring stereo, a good reel-to-reel recorder is recommended because of the ease in post-production editing.
3. Select good quality (1.5 mil) audio tape, preferably virgin quality (unused or unspliced) on seven inch reels (30 minutes)—the extra tape is necessary for editing purposes. If only used tape is available, degausse (erase) it with a professional degausser before recording. If no degausser is available, be certain the audio recorder is totally erasing the previously recorded material before you begin making your master recording.
4. Make all recordings at the speed setting: 7½ ips (inches per second).
5. Place microphones as indicated in figure 1 and 2 for various size groups about eight to ten inches from the speaker.
6. When recording a large group, use two mikes. You'll probably need a stereo recorder which provides two mike inputs. However, a mike adapter that accepts two mikes (a "Y" connector) can be used effectively because it has only one jack to plug into the recorder. (see fig. 3).
7. Use a mike-stand in every case, although mikes can also be hung from the ceiling or a fixture. If you must lay it on a desk or some other support—insulate it from vibrations with a piece of cloth such as a handkerchief or chalk-board eraser.
8. Keep one copy of the script for noting where errors are made as the script is read. This will be important later during editing.

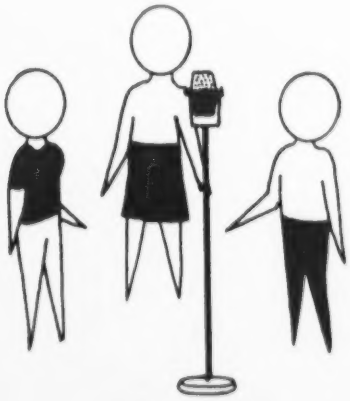


FIGURE 1

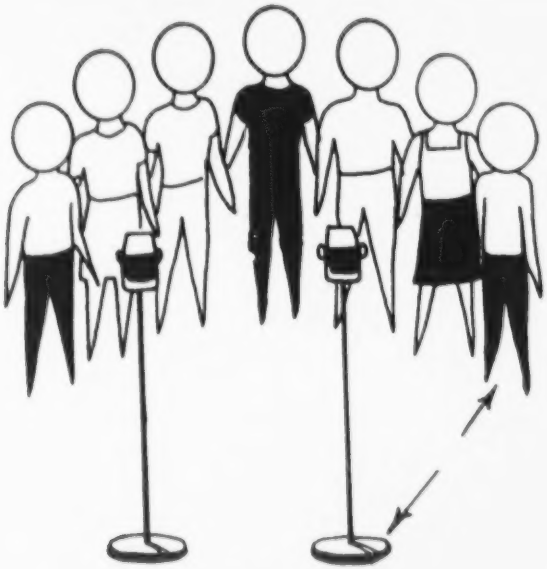


FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

V. RECORDING THE PRODUCTION:

1. Mix music or sound **as** you record the program. The sound bed (background music) should be selected in advance and played through several times before reloading to determine its applications to the script. Play the music on a record player or another tape recorder and have the player's speaker near the mike. Control volume by the output control of the player. **Practice** using music or taped sound effects **before** recording your master tape to pre-set levels (volume). If you're able to record directly into the master recorder through a patch-cord, do so, it makes a much more professional sounding recording; however, the master recorder must be stereo so that two tracks are available: one for music, one for voices. (see figure 4).
2. Post-production editing should be done mechanically with a marking pencil, single edged razor blade, editing block, and editing tape.
3. Once the edited program master is complete, it is best to dub (duplicate) it onto another tape, preferably a cassette for continuous use and ease of storage. Keep the master in a safe place away from possible erasure. Use a patch cord for recorder-to-recorder dubbing.
4. Sound effects can be created easily by students themselves. Be sure to use clear verbal cues to upcoming sound effects.

- **Thunder:** wiggle a large piece of heavy poster board in front of the mike.
- **Rain:** slowly crumble up a piece of cellophane at a short distance from the mike.
- **Fire:** crinkle up a piece of cellophane—rapidly.
- **Walking:** walk normally near the mike.
- **Firing Guns:** pop ballons.

The kinds of effects you want are mostly available right in the classroom—experiment!

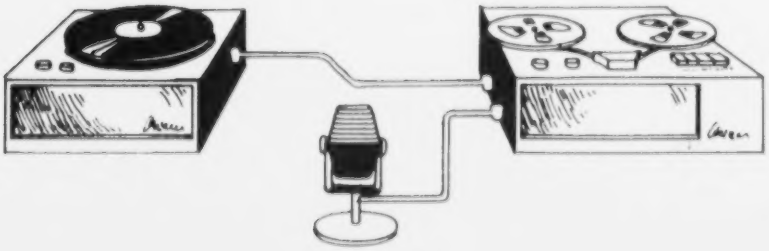


FIGURE 4

VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR RADIO PRODUCTIONS:

1. Tape student council meetings.
2. Prepare tape for PTA meetings.
3. Interview policemen, firemen, and community officials to supplement units of study.
4. Record oral presentations.
5. Dramatize a literary story; have students write one.
6. Record original student and teacher poetry.
7. Record concerts.
8. Teach rhythm and other music skills.
9. Evaluate or do play-by-play sports events.
10. Perform and replay theatre productions for criticism.

VII. GLOSSARY: (ITV and RADIO)

AM (Amplitude Modulation): The radio dial from 5:30-1600 KHz.
Ambience: The "sound" of the area in which you will record, as it is in its natural state. (A room with air conditioning sound; outdoors with birds and traffic, etc.)
Aspect Ratio: The numerical ratio of a picture height to width.
Audio: Of or concerning sound, specifically the electrical currents representing a sound program or the sound portion of a televised program.
Barn Doors: Hinged panels on spotlights for controlling (masking) light.
Bed (sound): The background music that is read over by the narrator or talent.
Boom: Either mike boom or camera boom. An elevating support for either mike or camera. Also means movement of entire camera; either up or down.
Brightness: The comparative intensity of light which the eye can see as illuminating an object or screen.
Camera: In television, an electronic device that contains an optical system and a light-sensitive tube that converts a visual image into electrical impulses.
Close-Up: A closer than normal picture of the subject as compared to other shots in the sequence (abbreviated CU).
Contrast: The degree of difference between light and dark areas.
Crop: The camera framing of a picture which excludes part of the subject.
Cue Card: A card placed off camera so that the instructor can read his lines or cues.
Cut: Synonymous with stop when used during production. A cut between scenes occurs when the picture from one source is instantly replaced with another scene.
Dolly: Camera movement either toward or away from another subject.
Dubbing: Duplicating video tape or inserting new audio into video.
Editing: The act of physically cutting audio tape to eliminate unwanted errors or sounds and re-assembling it at pre-determined spots.
FM (Frequency Modulation): The radio dial from 88-108 MH (generally static free broadcasting.) Also, the type of broadcasting used by all S.C. Educational Radio stations.
Flat: Referring to backdrop sections onto which scenery is painted or otherwise supported. In the theatre it is usually made of canvas stretched over a wooden frame. For television they can be made of hardboard, paper, plastic, styrofoam, and other materials depending on the need of mobility.
Frame: Electronically, one complete television picture one-thirtieth of a second in length. "In Frame" being what is included in the picture.
Halo: Most commonly, a dark area surrounding an unusually bright object, caused by overloading of the camera tube. Reflection of studio lights with a piece of jewelry, for example, might cause this effect. With certain camera tube operating adjustments, a white area may surround dark objects.
High Lights: The maximum brightness of the picture, which occurs in regions of highest illumination.

"In The Can": A term borrowed from the film industry to describe a scene or program which has been completed.
Jack: The plug at the end of an audio line that is plugged into a radio or audio recorder.
Key Light: A light (usually a spotlight) which is used in addition to general light for accent. The shadows from a key light are more clearly defined than that from a flood light.
Level: The average intensity of an audio or video source.
Long Shot: A wider than normal picture of a subject as compared to other shots in the sequence. Usually the full length of the subject, sometimes some of the surroundings.
Master: The final edited audio tape containing a recorded program from which duplicates can be made.
Mike: The common term for microphone.
Mix: The act of bringing together the various parts of an audio recording in a balanced and satisfying manner (to the ear) so that no part overwhelms the other.
Monaural (Mono): A one-track, one-channel recording (as opposed to stereo).
Network: An interconnection of facilities which allows the transmission of a single signal from one to many other points.
Noise: The word "noise" is a carryover from audio practice. Refers to random spurts of electrical energy or interference. May produce a "salt and pepper" pattern over the picture. Heavy noise is called "snow."
Popping: The sound produced during a recording by the explosive force of air from the mouth of a reader (talent) recording with a mike without a wind screen.
Speakers: The loudspeakers of an audio recorder or phonograph.
Stereo: Two-track, two-channel recording. Associated with audio recording where there is a distinct separation between tracks or channels.
Talent: The person performing before the mike.
Video: Of or concerning sight; specifically, those electrical currents representing the elements of the television picture.
Voice Over: A spoken message delivered off-camera as a narrative to television scenes.
Zoom Lens: A multi-purpose lens, sometimes electrically powered, which enables the operator to "zoom" from normal to telephoto (and intermediate) positions at the touch of a button or lever.